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Reporting practices used by school systems serving elementary age, educable mentally retarded children were determined and reporting techniques evaluated. All the Minneapolis-St. Paul school systems submitted specimen report cards, and 91 of a possible 124 teachers in 23 school systems completed a questionnaire appraising common reporting practices. Findings were that about half of the systems used regular report cards. Half used a special report card, while a small number used narrative reports. Written reports were generally sent four times yearly. All of the teachers reported having parent conferences; a few reported home visits to all pupils. The teacher questionnaire indicated the following: regular report cards are concise, simple to use, and time saving, but are not applicable to special classes and are subject to misunderstanding; special report cards share all the advantages of the regular report and none of its disadvantages; narrative reports are exact, individualized, and applicable, but are time consuming and provide no continuity. conferences are accurate and of help to the parents, but are time consuming, and home visits provide the teacher with useful information, but lack privacy and frankness. (DF)

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DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF REPORTING PRACTICES USED WITH ELEMENTARY SPECIAL CLASSES FOR EDUCABLE RETARDED CHILDREN IN THE MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL METROPOLITAN AREA

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INTRODUCTION

There has been much discussion among teachers of educable retarded children concerning the methods used in reporting to parents the progress of their educable retarded children. These discussions indicate that a variety of methods and combinations of methods are being utilized for this purpose. Teachers have expressed many disadvantages and inadequacies of the procedures they use. A survey of the literature in the field of mental retardation reveals that authorities generally agree that the children's progress should be reported to the parents, but they describe the various possible methods of reporting progress without advocating any particular technique. An examination of the numerous guides written for teachers of special classes shows that they, like the authors of the various texts, do not advise any one method to use. Some of them indicate the variety of possibilities but most of them do not comment on reporting at all.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (1960, p. 7) summarizes the problem in the following statements:

> The method of grading and reporting grades for mentally handicapped children is probably one of the most controversial issues in the field of special education today. There have been many ideas advanced but little agreed upon as to what constitutes a 'good' method of grading and this guide does not attempt to suggest such a method.

The need for the present study grew from an expressed desire to change and improve the procedure used to report to the parents of educable retarded children at the elementary level in the Richfield Public Schools. The faculty and administration were in full agreement that a change was necessary. In order to facilitate the best possible innovation it was agreed that a two-fold approach would be advantageous--first review the recommendations of the authorities in the field and the committees of teachers who have compiled guides for instruction of retarded children, and second, survey the techniques used by other school systems in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metropolitan area along with the teachers' evaluations of these techniques.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Reporting in General

One approach in planning a method of evaluation for retarded children is an examination of procedures used with regular classes to determine their applicability for use with the retarded. According to authorities in the field of education and teachers' reports, the report card is undisputedly the most common technique. A variety of report cards are in use since they are designed to make evaluations according to the various curricula of the school systems. Not only do the report cards vary, but there are numerous systems of marking them. Davis (1964, p. 287) summarizes the various ways marks are expressed as follows:

1. categories such as "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" or "passing" and "failing"
2. percentages from 0 to 100
3. letter marks, such as A, B, C, D, F
4. presence or absence of each element on a checklist
5. oral or written reports that are descriptive, or both descriptive and analytical.

He concludes that the fundamental purpose of marking is to tell each pupil and his parents how well he has attained the objectives of a course of study.

As a result of a survey of concepts of evaluation, Gwynn (1960) determined that a program of evaluation should (1) provide

a check on the effectiveness of the school and indicate the points which should be improved, (2) consolidate the philosophy or the purposes on or for which the school operates, (3) provide information basic to the individual guidance of pupils, and (4) provide a sound basis for public relations.

The value of marking as a motivational device should not be discounted since most pupils have a desire for approval from their teachers and parents. The approach of a reporting period encourages both the teacher and the pupil to consider objectively the pupil's progress and may stimulate some discussion between them concerning realistic goals and the degree of attainment that has been reached.

There appears to be some question about what should be the basis for marks. According to Davis (1964) some teachers argue that marks should represent as accurately as possible only the relative levels of achievement of the pupils. Others recommend that they should represent, at least in part, the amount of gain that pupils have made during the marking period. Still other educators suggest that marks should reflect the amount of effort the pupils display. Apparently the level of achievement is a joint product of the child's level of achievement at the beginning of the learning period, his capacity to learn the content, and the amount of effort expended in learning it. In practice, at the elementary level, the final marks probably represent a composite of these bases. It may not be desirable to consider these factors collectively since the parents and other teachers have no way of determining the relative proportion of each factor to the total grade.

In recent years the parent-teacher conference has grown rapidly as a means of informing parents of a pupil's progress. It is used mainly as a supplement to the written report card although in the primary grades it frequently has more value than a written report because it affords an opportunity to describe the child's accomplishments and difficulties and answer questions about them. Many school systems currently use checklists or conference guides which enable teachers to make the best possible use of the limited amount of time a teacher may spend with each child's parents. Herein lies the main disadvantage of the conference method of reporting. A great amount of time must necessarily be expended in planning the conference and collecting appropriate samples of the child's work if the conference is to be effective. In addition, a block of time must be scheduled for each child's parents. Where classes are large this becomes a formidible task. To alleviate this problem many schools now allow released school time for conferences. The conference does have the distinct advantage of soliciting information about the child from the parents which aids in understanding his problems and learning about his special interests. However, some parents refuse to come for a conference; and in many cases these are the very ones where a conference is needed most.

Regardless of the evaluation technique employed, adequate record keeping is essential. The types of records most frequently used are cumulative and general reports, work samples, health records, behavioral and anecdotal records, and progress reports on the child's academic achievement. All of these can be combined

effectively to gain an over-all picture when they are supplemented by observations derived in daily contact with the child.

Reporting in Special Classes

In reporting to parents of retarded children, the evaluation of a pupil's progress is essentially the first step, just as it is in reporting to parents of regular class children. This is not a periodic activity conducted just before progress reports are to be sent, but rather a continuous process applied to every aspect of the special class curriculum. Evaluation begins with the establishment of objectives to be attained by each of the pupils and determining the child's status in relation to these objectives. Pupil evaluation involves measurement of the child's progress in the basic skills areas and unit activities and observation of his behavior in all phases of the program. Collecting and recording of information on a daily basis lends itself to objective evaluation when compared with the child's capacity to achieve. It also serves as a diagnostic tool and provides an opportunity for the teacher to see the child's progress. In working with pupils of limited ability, day-to-day progress is likely to be small and may seem to the teacher to be nonexistent. Records of progress over a longer period of time help the teacher perceive the progress that is being made.

Because standards or norms cannot be established for the retarded due to their varying abilities, no absolute criterion for evaluation can be established. Teachers have found that pupils must be appraised on a number of relative criteria. According to

the Illinois Plan for Special Education of Exceptional Children (n. d.) these are:

1. The extent to which academic progress approaches the level expected as indicated by his mental age and his own pattern of abilities.

2. Progress in the development of physical co-ordination in both large and small muscle activities.

3. Progress toward increasing social maturity. This is shown in the quality of his play with others, in his ability to take responsibility, in his self discipline, and in his widening social interests.

4. Good mental health. The extent to which the child makes adjustment to his school life. His development to attitudes that will help him be a well-adjusted adult at maturity.

At the same time teachers are appraising pupil progress they are evaluating the effectiveness of their class programs, assignments, and procedures to determine their utility in achieving the objectives set for the class. Teachers must consider the children's individual differences and the emotional atmosphere of the classroom in relation to the children's progress. Clearly the process of reporting to parents assumes an extremely important role in the special education classroom and should not be underestimated.

A Resource Guide for Teachers of Educable Mentally Retarded Children in Minnesota Public Schools (1966) ascribes the reporting to parents of their child's progress by the special class teacher as an important duty. It further advocates that in order to give parents a picture of their child that is as complete and accurate as possible it is important to use a combination of oral and written methods of reporting. The implications appear to be that a written report does not provide complete and accurate information and an

oral report does not record information for future comparison, thus, a combination is deemed desirable.

Authorities tend to enumerate the various methods of reporting pupil progress without advocating any method as superior. They are generally in agreement in their evaluations of the methods used and their suggestions for the implementation of them. They conclude that the type of regular report card currently in use in most school systems is inadequate by itself, not only in special classes but also in regular classes. The use of the standard report card avoids singling out of special pupils as being different, but it is inflexible and its rigid limits reduce the breadth of communication between teachers and between parents and teachers.

If a special report card is used, it should be issued at the same times as those in regular classes and should approximate the traditional card insofar as possible in such characteristics as form and color. Whether special class teachers use a traditional card or an adapted version, it is essential that such a system be supplemented with parent conferences and perhaps some other reporting method. The grading system should be the same in special classes as it is in the regular school program. If letter grades are assigned, special teachers must determine what is best in terms of their own philosophy with regard to grading and with what appears to fit in with the local school situation. Every effort should be made to insure that the procedure is understood by parents, pupils, and the rest of the staff. One of the guiding principles for assigning grades in special classes is that the marks must not be so low as to discourage the pupil and not so high as to give him an unrealistic value of his capabilities.

Parent-teacher conferences are generally considered to be one of the most effective methods of reporting to parents the progress their child is making in school because they permit direct, two-way communication. Active participation by the parents may be encouraged in an informal setting where privacy is assured. Conferences provide an excellent opportunity for establishing good rapport with the parents. It is important for the special class teacher to be aware of their possible emotional involvement and sensitive to their feelings relative to the situation. Kirk and Johnson (1951, p. 160) state:

> The teacher should remember that parents are interested in hearing good things rather than bad things about their children. A common practice is to get in touch with the parents only when their child has been misbehaving. Better results can be achieved when the teacher approaches the parents with positive contributions and positive behavior on the part of the child. In all conversations the good aspects of the child should be brought out; the misbehaviors should be discussed and analyzed but minimized. This is an important fact to be remembered by the teacher of mentally handicapped children.

To apply this technique to any conference, the teacher should initiate the discussion with positive statements about the child's assets, skills, achievements, and personality. The discussion can then proceed to areas needing improvement which parents can consider more objectively and realistically when they do not find it necessary to be on the defensive.

Supplements to Reporting

Although home visits are more time consuming than regular parent conferences, they may have the advantage of helping the teacher gain some insights concerning the child's behavior and attitudes by observing him in his home environment. Frequently they do not afford

sufficient privacy for frank discussions. Teachers should endeavor to avoid becoming involved in a discussion of family problems and should attempt to center the conversation on the progress of the child. A school social worker might be better qualified than a teacher to interpret the effect of the child's home environment on his personality and attitudes. A follow-up discussion between the teacher and social worker might reaffirm the teacher's evaluation and help the teacher understand the child more fully.

Informal notes are especially meaningful to parents because they imply friendliness and a genuine concern for the child. A newsletter may provide information concerning various activities and bits of school news. If its preparation involves participation by the pupils, it can be a learning experience as well as a report to the parents. In their discussion of the importance of parent education, Kirk and Johnson (1951) suggest a parent-teacher meeting to discuss the curriculum of the class. They feel the parents will appreciate the curriculum of the class if they understand it better and that some benefit is derived by parents discussing with other parents their common problems.

COMPARISON OF REPORTING METHODS

Description of the Procedure

For the present study a questionnaire* was constructed for appraising reporting practices commonly used with retarded children. The questionnaire was based on the suggested techniques to be used for pupil evaluation listed in the Illinois Plan for Special Education of Exceptional Children (n. d., p. 232) which enumerates the following methods:

1. the use of the same reporting method employed by the rest of the school.
2. a special education report card
3. a letter to the parents
4. a conference
5. a home visit
6. any combination of these.

Teachers were to be asked to indicate the methods they used and the frequency of their use. Questions were formulated for the purpose of learning the types of information each kind of report provides for the parents. The questions were designed to determine whether the report supplies the information which it was felt is desirable. Teachers were then to be asked to express their opinions concerning the completeness of their reporting method for providing information for a transfer student. This part was considered to be important because a special class teacher receiving a transfer student

*See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.

needs considerable information concerning the child's abilities and personality since these characteristics vary so widely from one individual to another. Much valuable time is wasted in making evaluations before proper placement can be made. If the reporting method were so designed that it included a maximum of information, it would be unnecessary for the teacher to supply an additional or supplementary report.

Teachers were to be asked if their reporting method solicited an objective appraisal. The Illinois Plan for Special Education of Exceptional Children (n.d.) warns that without objectivity, evaluation may suffer or even fail. The close association with the children in the classroom and the interest of the teacher in her work make it easy to lose objectivity. Both for the good of the class and her own mental health, the teacher must strive to look at the children and their performance realistically. She must be aware of the dangers of the halo effect.

The opinions of teachers were to be solicited to determine whether or not their methods were felt satisfactory or could be improved and to what degree they were meaningful to the child. The purposes of these questions were to determine the types of reports teachers prefer and their value to the child. Although any evaluation is technically a report to the parents, the children are generally concerned about what it says. It was felt that if the report is to have any value as a motivational device, the children must have some understanding of it.

Finally, the teachers were asked to list advantages and disadvantages of their method of reporting.

After a tentative questionnaire was drafted two special class teachers at the elementary level in the Richfield Public Schools completed it for the purpose of suggesting modifications. They agreed that it solicited the information necessary for revising their own report card. Their suggestions for clarifying specific questions were incorporated in the final questionnaire subsequently sent to teachers in other school systems.

Selection of the Sample

Letters were sent to the superintendents* of each of the school systems in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metropolitan area explaining the purpose of the study and requesting permission to contact special class teachers with a questionnaire about their reporting practices. A copy of the questionnaire was enclosed. Administrators were also asked to nominate teachers to be contacted and to provide the writer with samples of the report cards, regular and special, which were being used. By applying the teachers' evaluations to the reporting method being used, desirable aspects of the programs might be observed and utilized while the undesirable aspects might be avoided in structuring an improved method of reporting.

Twenty-eight school systems were contacted with the initial letter. Of this group, two school systems stated that they had no classes for the educable retarded; all of the others indicated a willingness to cooperate in the study and nominated teachers to be contacted. The 124 teachers who were nominated were contacted with the questionnaire and an explanatory letter*. From this group 91

*Sample copies of the letters sent to the superintendents and teachers are included in Appendix A.

replies were received. The fact that 73 per cent of the teachers contacted took the time and initiative late in the school year to complete a five-page questionnaire indicates a high degree of concern in this area. Several teachers also expressed an interest in the results of the study and indicated a willingness to discuss the topic further through personal contact. These comments further emphasize the need for a study of this nature.

Appendix B provides tabulated information concerning the school systems that were contacted, the number of questionnaires sent, and the replies received.

Description of Written Reporting Methods

Each of the 91 teachers who completed and returned the questionnaire reported using both written and oral methods of reporting pupil progress. Table 1 summarizes the types of written progress reports used to evaluate elementary retarded classes in the school systems that participated in this study. Rather than showing responses by teachers, it was decided to present results in terms of the school systems reporting since the methods used within school systems were consistently reported.

All teachers reported sending some type of written progress report to the parents although many commented that their report cards did not adequately convey an evaluation of the child's progress. This was especially true of teachers using regular class report cards. These teachers concur with authorities that a report card used in special classes must be supplemented with parent conferences or other reporting methods.

Table 1

Types of Written Progress Reports Used by Special Class Teachers

	number of special class teachers in the school system						Totals	
	10 or more		4 to 9		1 to 3			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School systems reporting	2		6		15		23	
Regular report card	2	100	2	33	6	40	10	43
Special report card	0		2	33	8	53	10	43
Narrative report	0		2	33	2	13	4	17

Note: A school system may use more than one type of written report; therefore sums may exceed 100 per cent.

In comparing the totals it can readily be seen that the school systems are equally divided in the use of regular and special cards. The table also shows that the larger school systems are more likely to use the same card issued to regular pupils and as the size of the school system decreases, the percentage using special cards increases. From this information, it may be inferred that special class teachers in the larger school systems follow a uniform procedure established for them while teachers in the smaller school systems, finding the regular card inadequate, have improvised with a special card. A comparison of the regular cards used in large and small school systems

reveals that those used in the large school systems are no more suitable for evaluation of special class pupils than those used in the small school systems. In the smaller school systems it may be easier to facilitate a change, especially if the special teachers are in agreement that there is such a need. Unquestionably it is a simpler matter to obtain a consensus of opinion in a small group than in a large group.

A small percentage of the total group indicated using a narrative report to inform parents of pupil progress. This method like the special report card was used by teachers in the smaller school systems to replace the inappropriate regular report card. Its use was frequently reported for the purpose of supplying additional information for a transfer student rather than periodic reporting to the parents.

Frequency of Written Reports

Table 2 was formulated to determine if any relationships exist between the frequency with which written progress reports are sent to the parents and the size of the school systems or the type of written report used.

Most school systems send written reports to the parents four times a year. This is in general agreement with the recommendations of authorities who advise frequent contact with parents to maintain optimum home-school relationships. Since teachers of regular class pupils also report to parents four times yearly, it is assumed the marking periods for special classes coincide with those of regular classes. It is desirable for special class pupils

to receive written evaluations at the same time regular class pupils do inasmuch as this emphasizes the likenesses of the two groups rather than their differences.

Table 2

Frequency of Use of Written Reports

Number of special class teachers in school system	Type of Report	Frequency of use in times per year				Total
		1	2	3	4	
10 or more	Regular		1	1		2
	Special					
	Narrative					
	Total		1	1		2
4 to 9	Regular			1	1	2
	Special				2	2
	Narrative	1	1			2
	Total	1	1	1	3	6
1 to 3	Regular		2*		4	6*
	Special	1	1	1	5	8
	Narrative	1*			1	2*
	Total	2*	3*	1	10	16*
Total		3*	5*	3	13	24*

*Figures include one school system which used two regular reports and one narrative report yearly.

There are no significant differences in the frequency of use of regular and special report cards. Narrative reports, however, were found to be sent less frequently, probably due to the amount of time required to complete them and to the fact that for some this procedure is used as a supplement to another method of reporting.

In cases where written reports were sent three times yearly it was observed that the school systems prescribe four marking periods but a conference is held in lieu of one of the written reports. Teachers in school systems that reported sending two written

appraisals yearly substituted conferences at alternate marking periods. Teachers in one school system indicated the use of the conference as the basic method of reporting and one narrative report yearly as a supplement.

There is no apparent relationship between the frequency of sending written reports and the size of the school system. Within school systems where more than one teacher replied, teachers were consistent in reporting the frequency of written evaluations, indicating that uniform procedures have been established.

EVALUATION OF REPORTING METHODS

Regular Report Cards

To facilitate comparisons of regular and special report cards and their relative adequacy for evaluating special class pupils, teachers were requested to indicate the types of information furnished by the card they use. This was done by checking the appropriate response to the following questions.

1. Does the report give an appraisal of academic achievement?
2. Does the report inform parents of their child's current instructional level in the academic areas?
3. Does the report give an evaluation of the child's character development?
4. Does it include space for comments by the teacher?

These types of information were considered to be desirable and to be characteristic of most report cards. The replies to these questions, tabulated by school systems, are shown in Table 3 for regular report cards.

From the samples of regular report cards returned with the questionnaires, it can be concluded that there are as many types of regular report cards as there are school systems using them. All of them provide some method of appraising academic achievement and 90 per cent provide for an evaluation of the child's character

development. These are probably the main objectives of the report card; at first glance it appears that the report cards accomplish their purpose. The extent to which they fulfill these functions and their utility for appraising special class children will be shown later.

Table 3

Types of Information Included on Regular Report Cards

		Number of special class teachers in school system						Total	
		10 or more		4 to 9		1 to 3			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School systems using regular card		2		2		6		10	100
Appraise academic achievement	yes	2	100	2	100	6	100	10	100
	no	0		0		0		0	
Inform of instructional level	yes	1[a]	50	0		1	17	2	20
	no	1	50	2	100	5	83	8	80
Evaluate character development	yes	2	100	2	100	5	83	9	90
	no	0		0		1	17	1	10
Provide space for comments	yes	1	50	1	50	5	83	7	70
	no	1[b]	50	1	50	1	17	3	30

[a] in reading only
[b] An exchange of information form is commonly included with the report card.

Seventy per cent of the school systems employing the regular report provide space for comments by the teacher and another 10 per

cent use an exchange of information form which teachers indicated they usually enclose with the report card. There is an obvious need for explanatory remarks and individualized commentary when using regular reporting methods with special class children. Many teachers indicated the frequent use of phone calls, notes to parents, or additional conferences for this purpose.

In response to the question, "Does the report inform the parents of their child's current instructional level in the academic areas?" only 20 per cent said that they did. In their comments the teachers explained their method of supplying this information when it was not included on the report card. One may infer that this information is vital to the parents, and most report cards are delinquent in this respect.

As criteria for evaluating regular class report cards for use in special classes, the teachers were asked to respond to the following:

1. In your opinion, would your reporting method provide sufficient information for a teacher receiving a child as a transfer student?

2. In your opinion, does your reporting method solicit an objective appraisal by the teachers?

3. Check the item which, in your opinion, best describes the reporting method you are now using:

   very satisfactory ____

   could be improved with revisions and/or modifications ____

   unsatisfactory ____

4. In your opinion, is your reporting method meaningful to the child?

   understood by the child ____

   partially understood by the child ____

   little or no value to the child ____

5. List the advantages and disadvantages of your method of reporting.

The four questions were designed to determine the degree to which the progress report approaches what were considered to be its optimal uses. These evaluations would probably apply to most regular report cards currently in use. By listing the advantages and disadvantages teachers might include those which pertain to their particular card.

Table 4 shows the responses to these questions. Different teachers' opinions of the same reporting method varied; therefore, they are tabulated in terms of the number of teachers' responses. The advantages and disadvantages are listed following the explanatory remarks about the table.

The regular report card does not, according to a majority of the teachers supply sufficient information for a transfer student. Many of the 40 per cent who said their method provided sufficient information indicated that "their method" included more than the regular report card. Teachers reported that their school systems require additional information kept in the cumulative folder which accompanies a transfer student or that they send a descriptive letter. If the transfer is within the twin city metropolitan area, phone calls may be used to convey the pertinent information.

A report card may or may not be objective in its appraisal of the child's progress. A comparison of the report cards discloses that there were no peculiar important differences which make some solicit a more objective appraisal than others. In most cases where two or more teachers evaluated the same report card, their evaluations varied. Teachers were reserved in their comments in

Table 4

Evaluation of Regular Report Cards

		Number of special class teachers in school system			Total	
		10 or more	4 to 9	1 to 3	No.	%
Information for a transfer student	yes	17	4	3	23	40
	no	26	3	3	32	55
	no reply	0	1	2	3	5
Solicit objective appraisal	yes	29	2	5	36	62
	no	13	4	0	17	29
	no reply	1	2	2	5	9
Description of method	very satisfactory	8	2	2	12	21
	could be improved	24	3	5	32	55
	unsatisfactory	11	3	0	14	24
Understood by the child	understood	13	1	0	14	24
	partially understood	18	5	5	28	48
	little or no value	12	2	2	16	28
Number of teachers replying		43	8	7	58	
Number of school systems using regular card		2	2	6	10	

this area except for one, whose query was, "Why should it be?" This may well be a clue that the objectivity of the appraisal is a function of the teacher rather than the report card.

The table indicates mixed feelings in regard to the meaningfulness of the report card to the child. A survey of the identification data on the questionnaire clarifies this to some extent. Teachers of children in the upper elementary age range indicated that their pupils understood the report card while those who teach the

primary age group reported that their pupils did not. Comments by the teachers revealed that many take time to explain the report cards to the children, thereby enabling the child at least partially to understand the report card.

A great majority of the special class teachers who used regular class report cards felt they were unsatisfactory or could be improved with revisions or modifications while 21 per cent felt they were satisfactory. Their reasons become apparent when the advantages and disadvantages which were enumerated are considered. Teachers' comments are listed below.

Advantages of the regular report card as reported by the teachers:

1. It is simple to use.
2. Its prepared form saves time.
3. It is unnecessary to be specific.
4. It is concise.
5. It provides something tangible for the parents.
6. It provides for continuity and uniformity in reporting the child's progress within the school files.
7. It emphasizes the similarity of these children to regular class children rather than their differences.
8. It helps maintain self-esteem.
9. The children are subjected to fewer derogatory remarks.
10. The section on character traits and social growth is meaningful to the parents.
11. Each subject has certain criteria relating to it and these can be checked according to needs.

12. It creates a desire in the children to improve.

13. A formal system is helpful when a change of teachers takes place.

14. Space is provided for comments.

15. It is convincing.

Disadvantages of the regular report card as reported by teachers:

1. It does not accurately report what is developing in the classroom.

2. It is frequently misunderstood by the children.

3. It is subject to misunderstanding and misinterpretation by the parents.

4. It is incomplete.

5. It is not realistic with the problems inherent in special classes.

6. It does not apply to the curriculum used in special classes.

7. It may give parents false hopes as to the abilities and accomplishments of their child.

8. It is not individualized.

9. The children become grade conscious.

10. It tends to rate the child in competition with others in the group rather than in terms of his own progress.

11. It is difficult to rate the child's achievement according to his ability.

12. It is too vague.

13. Parents tend to compare marks with those of "normal" siblings.

14. Grades are a judgment of the teacher based on the teacher's standards and are therefore inconsistent.

Special Report Cards

The questions used to determine the types of information provided by special class report cards were the same as those used for the regular report cards. Teachers checked the appropriate response indicating whether their report appraised academic achievement, informed parents of the child's instructional level, evaluated character development, and included space for comments by the teacher. The results are summarized by school systems in Table 5.

Table 5

Types of Information Included on Special Class Report Cards

		Number of special class teachers in school system							
		10 or more		4 to 9		1 to 3		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School systems using regular card		0		2		8		10	
Appraise academic achievement	yes			2	100	8	100	10	100
	no			0		0		8	
Inform of instructional level	yes			0		3	37½	3	30
	no			2	100	5	62½	7	70
Evaluate character development	yes			2	100	8	100	10	100
	no			0		0		0	
Provide space for comments	yes			2	100	7	87½	9	90
	no			0		1	12½	1	10

Like regular class report cards, special cards have as their main objectives the appraisal of academic achievement and the evaluation of character development. Ninety per cent of the school systems in this group as compared with 70 per cent in the preceding group provided space for comments by the teacher. Apparently this provision allows for individualizing the report while the printed sections are constructed to make a general evaluation of the child in the various academic and personality areas.

Information concerning the instructional level in the academic areas was included by 30 per cent of the school systems as compared with 20 per cent in the group using regular report cards. Many of those who did not supply this information on the report card commented that they informed the parents of the instructional level through conferences, phone calls, or some other method.

An examination of the various special class report cards reveals that there is little similarity among them. They represent an attempt to revise the regular class card and adjust it to the curriculum of the special class and minimize comparisons with reports of "normal" children. They generally provide information in a concise manner and appear to keep the task of reporting from becoming time consuming drudgery for the teacher.

The criteria for evaluating special report cards were the same as those for regular cards. The teachers were asked to respond to the following:

1. In your opinion, would your reporting method provide sufficient information for a teacher receiving a child as a transfer student?

2. In your opinion, does your reporting method solicit an objective appraisal by the teacher?

3. Check the item which, in your opinion, best describes the reporting method you are now using?

very satisfactory ___

could be improved with revisions and/or modifications ___

unsatisfactory ___

4. In your opinion, is your reporting method meaningful to the child?

understood by the child ___

partially understood by the child ___

little or no value to the child ___

5. List the advantages and disadvantages of your reporting method.

The four questions were structured to ascertain to what extent the progress reports approached what were felt to be their optimal uses. By applying the evaluations to their respective report forms some conclusions might be drawn suggesting which types of reports have proved practical and expedient and which have not. Any stated advantages and disadvantages of each would presumably confirm these conclusions.

The teachers' responses to the four questions are summarized in Table 6.

Like the regular report card, a special class report card generally does not supply sufficient information for a transfer student. Among the 39 per cent who said their method did supply the information needed, several explained that "their method" included additional information, usually a descriptive report.

Table 6

Evaluation of Special Report Cards

		Number of special class teachers in school system			Total	
		10 or more	4 to 9	1 to 3	No.	%
Information for a transfer student	yes		2	5	7	39
	no		5	5	10	56
	no reply		0	1	1	5
Solicit objective appraisal	yes		4	9	13	72
	no		2	1	3	17
	no reply		1	1	2	11
Description of method	very satisfactory		1	4	5	28
	could be improved		5	4	9	50
	unsatisfactory		1	3	4	22
Understood by the child	understood		0	2	2	11
	partially understood		7	5	12	67
	little or no value		0	4	4	22
Number of teachers replying			7	11	18	
Number of school systems using special card		0	2	8	10	

Seventy-two per cent of this group as compared with 62 per cent of the group using traditional report cards felt that their report form solicited an objective appraisal. This increased percentage may be attributed to a difference in point of view. The fact that these teachers have taken the time and initiative to revise the regular report card indicates that they are seeking a more objective evaluation and thus approach the appraisal with this criterion in mind. There

remains 17 per cent who did not feel that their special report card solicited an objective evaluation. This finding tends to bear out the conclusion reached in the evaluation of regular report cards: objectivity is related to the teacher's purpose in using the card rather than to the type of report being utilized.

To derive any meaning from the teachers' opinions in the preceding table, it is necessary to relate each evaluation to the specific report card it evaluates because there was a great variation in the types of cards used. Those who described theirs as very satisfactory were generally using a revision of the regular card, similar in format, size, shape, and color to the regular card. It is relatively simple to use and is organized around the curriculum of the special class. Those who felt their card could be improved with revisions and modifications used a similar technique, but it generally represented a trial method. It used some means of duplication which the school employed rather than a printed form and was intended to be revised as the need was seen through its practical application. Teachers who felt their method was unsatisfactory were using a report indicating broad areas which required evaluations expressed in descriptive terms. To use them to their best advantage appears to be a time consuming and tedious task. In schools where more than one teacher evaluated the same special report card they were far more consistent than those evaluating the regular report card.

The teachers reported that most of the children partially understood what the report card expressed. Many teachers commented that they explained the information to the children to insure under-

standing. Teachers of the primary age children found that this group did not understand the report card while teachers of the upper elementary age children generally indicated that this group did understand it.

The teachers listed the advantages and disadvantages of the specific report card being used. Due to the great differences in the report forms some advantages and disadvantages do not apply to all the cards. It is unnecessary to indicate which type of report was being considered as this usually becomes obvious in reading the statements.

Advantages of the special report card as reported by the teachers:

1. It gives the child a feeling of belonging to take home a report card as other children do.
2. Parents get a general picture of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance by the child.
3. The child is compared with his own ability rather than in competition with others in the group.
4. Areas of difficulty can be readily observed.
5. Improvement in any area can easily be seen.
6. It is simple to use.
7. It is meaningful to the children in terms of what their "normal" friends receive.
8. It is concise.
9. The prepared form saves time.
10. A formal system is helpful in providing continuity and uniformity from one report to the next and from one term to the next.
11. It meets the needs of the special class pupil better than the regular card.
12. It is applicable to the curriculum of the special class.

13. It is flexible.

14. It is individualized.

15. By expressing an appraisal in descriptive terms, the teacher can be specific.

Disadvantages of the special report card as reported by teachers:

1. Each report reflects the standards of the teacher and makes the method inconsistent.

2. It limits the areas to be evaluated.

3. It is incomplete.

4. It is not consistent with the methods used in regular classes.

5. It is time consuming.

6. It is subject to misinterpretation by the parents.

7. Any report form that is different from that used in the regular classes labels these children as different.

Narrative Reports

To compare the relative adequacy of the narrative report for evaluation of special class pupils with regular and special report forms, three questions were the same for all groups:

1. Does the report give an appraisal of academic achievement?

2. Does the report inform the parents of their child's current instructional level in the academic areas?

3. Does the report give an evaluation of the child's character development?

The fourth question regarding space for comments by teachers using regular and special report cards was deleted for teachers using

narrative reports since these reports are essentially composed of the teacher's comments. In addition to the above questions the special teachers using narrative reports were asked if their report were structured and, if so, how it was done. The summary of the teachers' responses to these questions tabulated by school systems constitutes Table 7.

Table 7

Types of Information Included on Narrative Reports

		Number of special class teachers in school system							
		10 or more		4 to 9		1 to 3		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School systems using narrative report		0		2		2		4	
Appraise academic achievement	yes			2		2		4	100
	no			0		0		0	
Inform of instructional level	yes			2		2		4	100
	no			0		0		0	
Evaluate character development	yes			2		1		3	75
	no			0		1		1	25
Use structured report	yes			0		1		1	25
	no			2		1		3	75

Teachers from four of the 23 school systems reporting indicated that they used a formal narrative report to inform the parents

of pupil progress. The fact that so few used this form is undoubtedly due to the amount of time necessarily expended in writing them as compared with a report card of some type. Ostensibly they perform the functions of appraising academic achievement and informing parents of the current instructional level of the child. An evaluation of the child's character development may or may not be included. It should be pointed out that two of the school systems included in the table use the formal narrative report as a supplement to another method of reporting while two use it as their basic method.

Generally these reports are not structured. This allows much latitude for the teacher; she can elaborate on problem areas which may need explanation and interpretation and comment briefly on others. Structuring the report tends to keep the curriculum in focus and stresses adherence to it. In the above table, one school system reported using a structured report. The outline followed, it was explained, is the academic achievement section of the regular report card.

The procedure for evaluation of the narrative report included responding to the same questions as for the report cards and listing its advantages and disadvantages. To recapitulate on the questions, they required opinions concerning:

1. information for a transfer student
2. objectivity of the appraisal
3. degree of satisfaction of the method
4. meaningfulness to the child.

The teachers' responses to the questions are expressed in Table 8.

Table 8

Evaluation of Narrative Reports

		Number of special class teachers in school system			Total	
		10 or more	4 to 9	1 to 3	No.	%
Information for a transfer student	yes		13	2	15	94
	no		1	0	1	6
	no reply		0	0	0	
Solicit objective appraisal	yes		12	2	14	88
	no		1	0	1	6
	no reply		1	0	1	6
Description of method	very satisfactory		8*	1	9	56
	could be improved		6*	1*	7	44
	unsatisfactory		0	0	0	
Understood by the child	understood		4	1	5	31
	partially understood		6	1	7	44
	little or no value		4	0	4	25
Number of teachers replying			14	2	16	
Number of school systems using narrative reports		0	2	2	4	

*Evaluation expressed the degree of satisfaction of a combination of methods.

Compared with report cards, regular or special, the narrative report is apparently far more effective in supplying information for a teacher receiving a child as a transfer student. The narrative report was not only rated higher in this respect by teachers using it, but teachers using report cards frequently indicated using a narrative report to supply the necessary additional information for

this purpose. The narrative report is also more likely to solicit an objective appraisal than the previously discussed methods. Eighty-eight per cent of this group as compared with 62 per cent of those who used regular report cards and 72 per cent of those who used special report cards indicated an objective appraisal is sought. Expressing the child's progress in descriptive terms apparently requires more thoughtful consideration and exacts a comparison of achievement with expected attainment which lends to objectivity.

The opinions of those teachers who indicated that their reporting method was very satisfactory, could be improved with revisions and modifications, or unsatisfactory provided by the table are somewhat misleading. Three of the four school systems use a combination of methods and their evaluation applies to a composite of these methods. One school system sends a narrative report once yearly with the basic method of reporting being conferences, another uses narrative reports and conferences at alternate reporting periods. In one case the narrative report is a supplement to the regular report card.

From the teachers' comments it appears that many teachers read and explain the reports to the children to help them understand what the narrative report tells. This is highly commendable for, although these are reports to the parents, the children are concerned and deserve to know their status. Even with explanation there are some for whom the report is of little or no value as reported by teachers of the primary age group.

Advantages of the narrative report as reported by teachers:

1. The time spent preparing the narrative report lends to objectivity.

2. The child's progress can be compared with his own abilities rather than with the progress of his peers.

3. The choice of words can portray the message clearly.

4. It can inform the parents of the child's progress accurately through the use of exact terminology.

5. It can pinpoint specific problems.

6. It is unnecessary to assign a letter grade.

7. It is individualized and personal.

8. For parents who cannot or will not come for a conference it provides much information they would not otherwise receive.

9. Information can be expressed in vocabulary the parents understand.

10. It is applicable to the curriculum of the special class.

Disadvantages of the narrative report as reported by teachers:

1. It can leave much information unsaid.

2. The proper wording of information in descriptive terms can be time consuming.

3. It expresses the opinions of the teacher.

4. It can be too general.

5. If the report is not structured, some areas may be overlooked.

6. It is difficult for the child to understand.

7. The children prefer to get a report card as other children do.

8. It is not consistent with reports given to other children and with those kept in school files.

9. The reports are likely to lack continuity from one report to the next or from one teacher to the next.

Conferences

All of the teachers who responded stated that they used conferences to report to parents. A great degree of variation exists between school systems and within them in the number of conferences held yearly and in the length of each conference. Teachers from six school systems indicated having one or more conferences yearly while 17 reported having two or more. Their comments suggested that the number stated represented a minimum number of conferences held with a child's parents and additional conferences were scheduled according to the needs of the child. The amount of time allocated for each conference ranged from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the need. Thirty minutes appears to be a reasonable amount of time in cases where there are no serious problems. Seventy-eight per cent or 18 of the 23 school systems reporting provide released school time for conferences; teachers in the other 22 per cent (five school systems) conduct all of their conferences outside of school time. Of those allowing released school time, many stated that all conferences could not be conducted during the time allotted and to accommodate working parents some conferences were held before or after school. Some teachers follow a specific sequence or outline in conducting a conference while others do not. In a few school systems school policy requires the completion of a conference report which is subsequently filed with the child's records. Differing replies from teachers within the same school system lead to the conclusion that in most cases this is optional. In its practical application, the teacher prepares for the conference by noting remarks she wishes to make concerning each item

listed on the conference guide sheet. Following the conference, parental attitudes and reactions are added. This procedure proves especially helpful for beginning teachers who are somewhat skeptical of approaching conferences. A sample conference guide sheet is included in Appendix C, p. 83.

Because of the wide variation in number and length of conferences held by each teacher and the extensive comments and explanations concerning them it appears inappropriate to attempt to tabulate this information. It is apparent that the teacher's judgment and the child's needs determine their frequency and duration; this is highly desirable. It is easily discernible from the teachers' comments that their employment of conferences far exceeds the minimum requirements established by the various school systems. Special class teachers recognize the need for understanding and cooperation between the home and school and appear to be willing to expend whatever effort is needed to achieve it.

The evaluation of conferences is expressed through the advantages and disadvantages listed by the teachers. Since this method was either a supplement to or was supplemented by some other reporting method it is obvious that it should not be compared with them, but should be appraised on its own values.

Advantages of conferences as reported by teachers:

1. It elicits interaction between the parents and teacher.
2. It provides an opportunity to expand discussion of important areas.
3. Problems can be discussed frankly without committing opinions to writing.

4. It opens avenues of communication between home and school.

5. It provides occasion for parents to examine their children's daily work and test results and have them explained.

6. Parents can have their questions answered.

7. It is unnecessary to grade children in competition with their peers.

8. It promotes cooperation between parents and teacher toward common goals.

9. It shows the teacher's personal interest in the child.

10. The teacher can most accurately describe the child's abilities and achievements through this method.

11. It encourages good public relations.

12. The child knows his parents and teacher are working together.

13. Much can be learned about the child from the parents.

14. It solicits an objective evaluation since judgments are open to challenge by the parents.

15. It is individualized.

Disadvantages of conferences as reported by the teachers:

1. Some parents won't come.

2. Conferences are extremely time consuming.

3. The child may feel there is a conspiracy between his parents and teacher.

4. If a written report summarizing the conference is not kept, there is no record for future reference by other teachers or counselors.

5. Unless the conference follows a specific outline, there is no continuity from one conference to the next or from one teacher to the next.

6. The reporting method does not include the child, consequently the report he gets is second-hand.

7. It does not provide anything tangible for the parents.

8. The child desires a report card as other children receive.

9. It is not consistent with records kept in the school files, often requiring supplemental reports.

10. It necessitates writing additional reports when pupils transfer to another school system.

11. It is inconsistent with the change to letter grades used when the child reaches the junior high school level.

12. For children who are integrated in regular classrooms or will return to the regular classroom, it interrupts the continuity of the reporting program.

Supplements to Reporting

The conclusion that special class teachers are conscientiously striving for optimal home-school relationships is supported by the number of teachers who reported the frequent use of phone calls to maintain close contact with the parents. Of the 91 teachers reporting, 65 per cent said they communicate with parents by telephone, some frequently and regularly and others occasionally. Thirty per cent of the teachers indicated home visits were employed, although a few stated these were made by the school nurse or social worker rather than the teacher. It was noted that in one school system home visits in the fall are an established procedure; in others the decision is apparently left to the discretion of the teacher. A limited number of teachers visit the home of each child, but generally

this technique is utilized in the event that neither parent is able to come for a conference. Phone calls and home visits were the most frequently listed supplements to the teachers' reporting methods perhaps because these were suggested on the questionnaire as examples of supplements which might be used. Eighteen percent of the teachers indicated the use of notes to parents for this purpose. These may be simply comments noted on samples of the children's daily work or a few friendly remarks stating progress the child has made. Notes to parents were generally employed to inform parents of commendable achievement or behavior and phone calls were used for a variety of purposes such as resolving difficulties and informing parents of unusual behavior, health problems, emotional crises, and praiseworthy accomplishments. Teachers in one school system reported using a weekly checklist indicating the child's health, character, and work habits which were recorded for each individual on a daily basis. This procedure might be particularly applicable for evaluation of hyperactive children who are on medication or for relating antisocial behavior to the circumstances which may have caused it.

Listed among other supplements to reporting methods were: a group conference at the beginning of the year in which the teacher defined her objectives and subject matter, open house, Christmas programs, mothers' teas, a class fair, parents' visitations to the classroom, and having parents accompany the class on field trips. The frequency with which these are used cannot be determined from the teachers' reports since they listed the ones which occurred to them at the time they completed the questionnaire and may have

failed to recall some which they use. It is sufficient to note that a variety of methods are employed and that special class teachers use ingenious techniques to supplement their prescribed reporting procedures.

All of the teachers from four school systems reported having special class PTA meetings. These ranged in frequency from three to five times yearly. Each special PTA made some provision for general consultation between parents and teachers, usually over coffee. The teachers reported that they avoided discussions of individual problems since the meetings were not a replacement for conferences and did not afford the privacy necessary for such frank discussion. If a parent questioned a teacher concerning a child's specific problem the teacher suggested scheduling a conference at a more convenient time.

The remaining 19 school systems apparently have no school policy regarding special class PTA meetings. Only four of the 110 teachers from these schools reported having such meetings.

The teachers' comments concerning special PTA meetings revealed two schools of thought on this subject. One coincided with the opinion of Kirk and Johnson (1951) that parents derive some benefit from discussing their common problems with other parents. The other supported the concept that parents of special class children should be encouraged to attend regular PTA meetings since this stresses the similarities of these children to regular class children rather than their differences.

No attempt was made to evaluate the success of special class PTA meetings or to determine topics which proved to be of interest to the parents.

Discussion

A survey of the literature concerning methods of reporting to parents of children in regular and special classes reveals a paucity of information. Authors who have commented on this subject have supplied brief and general advice. Those who have written in the field of mental retardation generally agree that it is necessary to report to parents through written reports of one kind or another and through conferences. They further agree that parents should be informed frequently; and, if possible, reporting periods should coincide with those of pupils in regular classes. They do not advise specific procedures for written reports. It is concluded that authorities recognize the fact that differences exist between school systems and their policies and feel that administrators and teachers are best qualified to make the final judgment as to what is most applicable in their situation.

Committees of special class teachers from many school systems and state departments of education have written guides for teachers of elementary educable handicapped children. The teachers who have worked on these guides have been concerned mainly with curricula for special classes, and most of them have either overlooked or chosen not to comment on reporting procedures. Those who have expressed their views on written reports are divided in their opinions; some advocating the use of the regular report card and others a special report form. These differences tend to confirm the previously stated conclusion that administrators and teachers should make the final judgment regarding the reporting method best suited to their needs. Apparently each guide reflects the consensus of opinion of

the committee of teachers who wrote it in their recommendations of a method or combination of methods of reporting after due consideration of the pupils they teach, their current procedures, and their philosophies of marking.

From the opinions of authorities and teachers as reported in guides for special class teachers and the results of the present survey it may be concluded that there is no one method which is most appropriate for use by all special class teachers. Each situation is unique and the choice of the most expedient procedure should be made on an individual basis. However, there appear to be some guiding principles which may be of practical value in the selection of the most appropriate technique. The objectives of the special class curriculum should be the first consideration. When the objectives have been listed, the regular report card may be compared with them to determine its utility for evaluation. The advantages and disadvantages of each method of reporting should be weighed with respect to the objectives of the curriculum and the philosophy of grading of the local faculty. Some attention should be given to the amount of time that will be required to complete the reports. Although some reporting methods, particularly the narrative report, augment accuracy of reporting, the amount of time spent in writing them may make them impractical to use. Whatever method is decided upon, it seems desirable to initiate it at the beginning of the school year or at the end of the first marking period and to inform the parents of its purposes and how it is to be interpreted. Its first year of use may be on an experimental basis during which time it should be constantly evaluated by the teachers for improvements; parents' reactions should be solicited. Finally, special class pupils should

have a report to take home to their parents on the same day regular class pupils do.

To make the report objective the child's achievements must be compared with his abilities. A procedure for determining what can be expected of a special class pupil has been suggested in the Special Education Curriculum Guide of the Jefferson County, Kentucky, Public Schools (1963) which recommends the establishment of an academic expectancy chart. The mental age of a child is computed using the following formula $MA=\frac{IQ \times CA}{100}$. The expected reading grade and arithmetic grade corresponding to mental age ranges are set up in a table. A note of caution is included--this is just an estimate and strengths and weaknesses within individual children must not be disregarded. This procedure is readily adaptable to all special classes and appears to have merit for grouping children for instruction as well as for evaluation.

Of equal importance in maintaining objectivity is adequate record keeping. This includes daily attendance and grades in the academic areas, anecdotal and health records, work samples, and results of achievement tests. By comparing this concrete evidence with the levels of expectancy the teacher can make an impartial appraisal and can substantiate her judgments in the event that questions arise.

The regular report card may be chosen to evaluate special class pupils for one of several reasons. The method of systematically reporting pupil progress to the parents may be determined by the local school administration. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (1960) points out that "...for the sake of uniformity

the teachers of the special classes may be required to conform to the established policy of the school." The regular report card is likely to be advocated for special classes in school systems where special class children are integrated in regular classrooms, especially if integration is in any of the academic areas. If it is the goal of the special class to replace pupils in the regular classroom full time and this goal is frequently reached, the regular report card is advantageous. The regular report card used in some schools may be broad enough in scope to encompass the special class curriculum and progress may be expressed in terms such as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" which are applicable to special class marking procedures.

Whatever the reason, it should be clearly stated on the report form that the marks apply to special class instruction and are based upon the child's ability to achieve. If the level of instruction in the academic areas is noted, the parents will be less likely to make false interpretations of the child's level of achievement. These items of information are also valuable for future teachers and counselors. It may be possible and advisable to modify the regular report form so that it will, to a greater degree, apply to the special class curriculum by affixing or deleting statements from the card. To illustrate, the word "readiness" may be added following "reading" to indicate that reading activities are at the readiness level or "expresses ideas in writing" may be obliterated from the language skills if the child does not yet write.

The Division of Special Education of the Cincinnati, Ohio, Public Schools (1965, pp. 5, 6) states:

> . . . grades on the report card in the academic subjects should reflect the fact that the pupil is a slow learner. This can be accomplished by adhering to the following guides:
>
> A's should be given rarely
> B's should be given seldom and only when a child is achieving at a level higher than would normally be expected based on psychological data
> C's should be given generally to pupils achieving at an average rate according to their capacity to learn
> D's may be given to pupils achieving below what is thought to be their capacity to learn
> F's should be given in only rare instances

This is in keeping with the writer's philosophy that grades for special class children should not be so low that they discourage the child nor so high that they give him an unrealistic opinion of his capabilities.

In the opinion of the writer, the regular report card is the least satisfactory type of written report forspecial class children in most school systems. This conviction is based upon an examination of the samples of regular report cards currently in use and the results of the present survey. Generally, the traditional report card does not apply to the special class curriculum and does not afford sufficient flexibility to adapt its usage to the special class. According to the opinions of the teacher respondents in the present study, this type of written report was the least likely to solicit an objective appraisal. It was most frequently described as unsatisfactory or in need of improvement and most often reported as having little or no value to the child. Its chief advantages are its

simplicity and the emphasis it places on the supposed similarity of educable retarded children to "normal" children. While many teachers appeared to be quietly acquiescent, those who were averse to this method commented frankly. The regular report was described by one teacher as a "perfunctory report", and another as "phony". Assigning grades was reported to be "a matter of coin flipping". Teachers also felt that reports should be more specific and should provide some method of relating the child's age level to his potential. Just two categories such as "S" (satisfactory) and "N" (needs improvement) were not considered enough--"things can't always be classified as black or white". The term "satisfactory" was considered ambiguous by some as it was not clearly defined. The frequency with which dissatisfaction with the regular report card was expressed leads one to wonder what attempts had been made by the teachers in these school systems to change their method of reporting. This, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

If a special report card is used, it should be similar to the regular report card in format, size, shape, and color. It should inform the parents of the instructional levels in the academic areas and include provisions for meaningful marking. The report should indicate that it is a special report card and marking procedures should be clearly defined so they will be understood by parents, pupils, counselors, and other teachers. In addition to appraising academic achievement, it should evaluate character development and provide space for explanatory remarks. Marking periods should coincide with those of regular classes. A special report must necessarily be designed by the teachers who will use it and approved by the

administration. The procedure followed in the drafting of a special report form in the Richfield Public Schools seems worthy of mention. It involved reviewing the literature on special class reporting, collecting sample special class cards and evaluations of them, and applying these to the regular report cards used in Richfield at the primary and intermediate levels. The resulting report form has proved highly satisfactory to teachers and parents. The teachers reported that it is complete, requiring only brief explanatory remarks. Pages 51, 52, 53, and 54 of this report are comprised of reproductions of the four pages of this report card.

The first page of this report card contains the same list of aims for the pupils and message to the parents that the regular report cards have. It has the same format as the regular cards and elicits the same identification information. When indicating the grade, the teacher specifies in which special class the child is enrolled.

The second page of the report card* identifies this as a special class report card. The form used to indicate the record of achievement is similar to the form used in the primary grades. It differs in that it contains more skills to be evaluated under reading, language skills, and other academic subject headings. The skills listed under each academic heading were selected by the special class teachers who would use the report card and enumerate those skills which the teachers felt were an integral part of each subject matter area. If the teacher feels that a child has not reached the mental maturity to possess certain of these skills she may leave these areas blank.

*See page 52 for a copy of this page of the report card.

Figure A

Page One of a Sample Special Report Card

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RICHFIELD, MINNESOTA

Progress Report

Pupil's Name_____

School_____ **Grade**_____

_____, **Teacher**

School Year 19____ and 19____

AIMS FOR PUPILS

1. Practice cleanliness in person, dress, thought and speech.
2. People judge you by your manners, therefore be polite and respectful to all whom you may meet.
3. Play hard, work hard. In other words do everything in earnest.
4. Punctuality and patience will reward you in great measure.
5. Be concerned with making yourself a fine person as welll as a smart one.

TO PARENTS

The purpose of this report is to recognize that the whole child goes to school. Education is broader than training in the school subjects. It involves training and guidance in the development of his physical health, his moral character and his social adjustment. All phases of his personality must be brought into play for his total development.

The main concern of the pupil should be to live up to the best there is in him. The main concern of the parent and the teacher should be to help the pupil in his striving toward this end. Through the progress report the school tries to give to pupil and parent a picture of the accomplishments and progress of the pupil. Only by home and school working intelligently and cooperatively together can the best interests of the child be served.

It is our earnest hope that this report attains in a measure the above aims. We urge that parents study and watch the report closely, and keep in touch with the teacher and the school at all times.

CARLTON W. LYTLE
Superintendent

Figure B

Page Two of a Sample Special Report Card

RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT
SPECIAL CLASSES

	1	2	3	4	Final Grade
READING:					
Understands what he reads					
Reads smoothly and accurately					
Reads with expression					
Completes workbook assignments					
Does assignments correctly					
Shows interest in reading lessons					
Library interest					
LANGUAGE SKILLS:					
Listens courteously					
Speaks clearly					
Expresses ideas orally					
Expresses ideas in writing					
Writes neatly and legibly					
Learns to spell assigned words					
Spells accurately in all written work					
Uses dictionary adequately					
ARITHMETIC SKILLS:					
Understands arithmetic meanings					
Solves word problems					
Knows basic facts					
Attitude toward arithmetic					
SOCIAL STUDIES:					
Is gaining in understanding of information					
Participates in class activities					
SCIENCE AND HEALTH:					
Is gaining in understandings					
Participates in class activities					
PHYSICAL EDUCATION:					
Shows adequate physical co-ordination					
Is learning game skills					
Participates actively					
Shows good sportsmanship					
MUSIC:					
ARTS AND CRAFTS:					

Figure C

Page Three of a Sample Special Report Card

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

	1	2	3	4	Final Grade
SOCIAL HABITS:					
Knows and follows rules					
Plays well with others					
Is courteous and considerate					
Is dependable					
Is learning self-control					
Is gaining self-confidence					
Respects property					
Respects authority					
Displays leadership in the classroom					
HEALTH HABITS:					
Keeps neat and clean					
Seems well rested					
Uses good table manners					
Practices adequate safety habits					
WORK HABITS:					
Listens attentively					
Follows directions to the best of his ability					
Works well independently					
Works well with others					
Makes good use of time and materials					
Works neatly and carefully					
Finishes assignments on time					

Present Reading Instruction at the

1st	2nd	3rd	4th

Grade Level

Present Arithmetic Instruction on the

1st	2nd	3rd	4th

Grade Level

	I	II	III	IV	FINAL
DAYS ABSENT					
DAYS PRESENT					
TIMES TARDY					

SYSTEM OF MARKING:

VS Very Satisfactory Achievement
S Satisfactory Progress
I Improving
N Needs to Improve
U Unsatisfactory

Figure D

Page Four of a Sample Special Report Card

SPECIAL COMMENTS BY TEACHER

First Period:

Second Period:

Third Period:

Fourth Period:

SIGNATURE OF PARENT *or* GUARDIAN

1st_____

2nd_____

3rd_____

4th_____

The form used to evaluate the child's character development, page three of the report card*, is similar to that used to evaluate character development in the primary grades but is more complete in its list of desirable characteristics. The special class teachers who formulated the list of characteristics felt that the same characteristics are desirable for special class children as for regular class children but since a revision was being made it was advantageous to improve upon the list currently used for evaluation in regular classes. This page also informs the parents of the child's current instructional level in reading and arithmetic. The report card might be improved by clarifying this section. The ordinal numbers above the boxes indicate marking periods and this is not clearly shown. The teacher indicates the grade level of instruction for each marking period. The word "readiness" may be written if this is the child's level of instruction.

Attendance is reported in the same manner as it is shown in the intermediate grades.

The report card is deficient in explaining the system of marking. The meanings of the letters used in the grading system are defined; however, there is no explanation that the marks express an evaluation of the child's achievement in relation to his ability. This is the philosophy of grading throughout the elementary grades in the school system so the report is not subject to misinterpretation by school personnel and parents are given this information through conferences. The writer, however, feels this explanation should be made on the report itself so it will not be misinterpreted by

*See page 53 for a copy of the third page of the report card.

personnel in another school system if the child transfers or by personnel in a referral agency who request school records for making an evaluation of the child.

The final page of the report card* consists of special comments by the teacher for each marking period. This space is limited; however, the teachers indicate that few explanatory remarks are needed because of the completeness of the academic achievement and character development sections of the report card.

This report card is included as a sample of the type of special class report card that appears to have considerable merit when its advantages and disadvantages are weighed. It is applicable to the special class curriculum and is simple to use. Differences between this report card and the traditional form are minor; thus attention is directed toward the similarities of special class children and regular class children. The continuity and uniformity characteristic of the regular report card are maintained. It presents a general picture of the child's performance and when supplemented by conferences, it provides an adequate evaluation of the child's progress.

In their evaluations, teachers using special report cards more frequently indicated that they solicited an objective appraisal than teachers using regular report cards. Special cards were more often rated very satisfactory than regular cards and two-thirds of the teachers indicated they were partially understood by the children.

It was noted that many teachers using special reports were evaluating them for purposes of revision. None of these teachers,

*See page 54 for a copy of the final page of the report card.

however, indicated that she would prefer to return to the use of the regular report card.

It has been suggested that teachers using narrative reports follow some structured approach so that no areas are overlooked. This may be done by following an outline of the various topics to be evaluated or by simply commenting on each item included on the regular report card. Such a report should include an appraisal of academic achievement and character development. Teachers will also find it helpful to compile a list of suggestive comments organized around the topics they will evaluate. A sample list is included in Appendix C, p. 83. The report should inform the parents of the child's instructional level in the academic areas, and a copy should be retained in the child's cumulative folder.

According to the teachers, narrative reports are considered by far the most objective of the written methods of evaluation. They are also considered very satisfactory by the teachers who use them. They are, however, sent less frequently than report cards. This is contrary to the advice of authorities who suggest identical reporting periods for regular and special classes and frequent communication with the parents. Its advantages are that it provides accurate information in exact terminology and is flexible, individualized, and personal. Its main disadvantages are that it is extremely time consuming and emphasizes the differences of special and regular class children rather than their similarities.

Conferences are an essential part of reporting to the parents. The teacher should prepare for a conference by completing

a conference guide sheet* which outlines the topics to be discussed. She should have her records of the child's daily grades and recent achievement test results at her fingertips. Samples of the child's daily work, books he is using, and his art and craft projects should be readily available. There should be sufficient privacy so discussions can be frank. After a friendly greeting, the teacher should initiate the evaluative discussion with positive comments about the child's achievement, behavior, and personality. A friendly, relaxed atmosphere should be maintained to help the parent feel at ease. The teacher should avoid taking over the conference and should encourage the parents to ask questions and express their feelings. Many topics outlined in the guide sheet will be covered in this manner, and a quick glance will remind the teacher of what remains to be discussed. While the teacher's approach would be positive and she should show a genuine interest in the child, she must guard against extending false hopes concerning future achievements that are inconsistent with the child's capabilities. If there are ways the parents can work with the child in areas where he needs assistance, this is a good time to give special instruction as to how they may help.

Following the conference the parents' reactions and attitudes should be noted on the conference guide sheet, and it should be dated and filed in the child's cumulative folder.

Children's questions about what is discussed in the conference require honest answers, but it is well to emphasize the fact that the parents and teachers are working together to help the child.

*A sample conference guide sheet is included in Appendix C.

Because of the time required in preparation for and holding of conferences it is desirable for the school to allow released time for them. In some school systems the conference is substituted for a written report for one or more marking periods. If this policy is followed in the regular classes, it should also be permissible in special classes. In the opinion of the writer, conferences are an integral part of the reporting method, and both oral and written techniques should be employed.

The teachers' reports indicated that they recognized the need for conferences although conferences are time consuming. While the teacher's opinions of the child's behavior and attitudes may be expressed, an objective appraisal of the child's progress relative to his potential is desirable. In most cases teachers felt conferences provided an opportunity to express accurate evaluations in exact terminology and to gain information about the child from the parents. Most teachers reported having conferences with each child's parents one or two times yearly and more often if warranted.

A disadvantage reported by some teachers is that some parents can't or won't come. In these instances another procedure such as a narrative report, phone call, or home visit should be substituted.

A home visit may reveal much about the child's position in the family constellation and his home environment. The school nurse or social worker, however, may be better qualified than the teacher to interpret the home situation. An added advantage of this procedure is that it solicits an additional appraisal by qualified personnel. In working with children with psychological problems it

is beneficial to consider the opinions of several people trained to evaluate problems of adjustment. If a home visit is to be made, the decision of who shall visit should be determined on an individual basis considering the available resources. If the teacher is visiting the home, the parents should be informed, and the visit should be at a time convenient for them. If the school nurse or social worker is making the visit, a more realistic evaluation may be obtained if she is unexpected.

As a substitute for a conference a home visit is unlikely to permit sufficient privacy for frank discussions, and the teacher usually does not have the materials at hand that she has if a conference is held in the classroom. Preferably conferences should be conducted in the classroom because in some homes one or both parents are not receptive to visits by the teacher and she is more likely to be subjected to outbursts of temper than she would be if the parents came to the school. In the final analysis, home visits are profitable in many situations, and the decision tomake them should be made after all the possibilities have been weighed.

Phone calls and notes to the parents were frequently used by teachers. There appeared to be no school policies concerning these, and teachers used whatever was most comfortable for them. The fact that most teachers communicate often with the parents is commendable. Comments jotted on the child's daily written work show the teacher's genuine interest in the child. Generally notes were used to comment on achievement, and phone calls were used for discussing behavior and health problems, emotional crises, and praiseworthy accomplishments. Any supplements which the teacher

uses, such as phone calls, informal notes, programs for the parents, and open house should be encouraged. The choice of supplements such as these should be left to the discretion of the teacher as each individual finds those which are most suitable to her needs and personality.

Special class PTA meetings may be desirable depending on the philosophy of the teacher and the interest demonstrated by the parents. If such meetings are held, they should be centered around topics primarily of interest to the parents such as problems related to the special class, its curriculum, and legislation for the retarded. If parents are encouraged to attend regular PTA meetings rather than special ones, it is suggested that they be encouraged to attend meetings of an association for retarded children so that they may have an opportunity to discuss their common problems with other parents of retarded children.

The teacher's evaluation of the child reflects her standards of achievement regardless of the method of evaluation. It also reflects her interpretation of the child's ability. Although an academic expectancy chart indicates the child's probable level of ability, the teacher applies her knowledge of the child's areas of strength and weakness in interpreting it. Due to the differences in teachers' standards and interpretations of the children's abilities, evaluations cannot be completely uniform. The teacher who expects greater achievement of a child may find that he is capable of more than others believed. His successes add to his confidence and provide further motivation. The teacher who expects less of the child provides a relaxed atmosphere relieving many of

the child's frustrations. Children need some urging to encourage them to do their best and some freedom from frustration so it appears there is some merit in the varied standards of the teachers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purposes of this study were to determine what reporting practices are commonly used for appraising educable retarded children and to evaluate these techniques. The procedure included a review of the literature in this field and a survey of the techniques used by school systems in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metropolitan area along with the teachers' evaluations of these techniques.

The literature revealed that the report card is the most common written method of reporting and conferences are the most common oral procedure used for regular class children. For special classes the authorities enumerate the possible written and oral methods of reporting. These include regular report cards, special report cards, narrative reports, conferences, and home visits. While authorities do not advocate a specific method of evaluation, they do advise the use of a combination of oral and written methods.

For the present study a questionnaire was constructed for appraising reporting practices commonly used with retarded children. Special class teachers in each of the school systems providing special classes for educable retarded children in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metropolitan area were contacted with the questionnaire. Of the 124 teachers contacted 91 replied.

The school systems were evenly divided in the use of regular and special report cards. A small percentage reported sending narrative reports. Most school systems require that written reports be sent to the parents four times yearly. Generally the written reports appraise academic achievement and evaluate character development. Approximately one-third of them inform the parents of the child's current instructional level in the academic areas.

In their evaluations of the reporting methods they used, most of the teachers indicated that the report card needed to be supplemented with additional information when a child transferred to another school. Most of the teachers felt their reporting method solicited an objective appraisal, that it could be improved with revisions and modifications, and that it was partially understood by the children.

All of the teachers reported having parent conferences. Generally conferences are held one or two times yearly and additional conferences are scheduled as the need becomes apparent.

A few teachers reported visiting the homes of all of their pupils but more often this technique was employed when a parent was unable to come for a conference.

Regular report cards are concise, simple to use, and their prepared form saves time. They satisfy the special class child's desire to receive a report card as other children do, thus emphasizing their similarity to other children. They provide for continuity and uniformity in reporting. They are subject to misunderstanding and misinterpretation by children and parents and are not applicable to the special class curriculum. Comparisons of the

special class pupil's report card with that of a child in regular classes may lead to unwarranted conclusions about the child's achievement.

Like the regular report cards, the special cards are concise, simple to use, and their prepared form saves time. They provide for continuity and uniformity in reporting and satisfy the child's desire to receive a report card as other children do. In addition they are applicable to the special class curriculum and are less likely to be subject to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. They do not encourage comparisons of the progress of a special class pupil with that of a pupil in regular classes.

Narrative reports provide an opportunity to express the child's progress in exact terminology. They are individualized and personal and are applicable to the curriculum of the special class. They are extremely time consuming and are inconsistent with reports given to other children and with those kept in the school files. They do not provide for continuity from one report to the next.

The teacher can most accurately describe the child's abilities and achievements through conferences. A conference also provides an occasion for parents to examine their child's work and to have their questions answered. It promotes cooperation between the parents and teacher and provides an opportunity for frank discussions. The greatest disadvantage of conferences lies in the amount of time required to prepare for and hold them. This has been alleviated in many school systems by providing released school time for conferences.

Through home visits a teacher can learn much about the child's relationships with his family. Generally they do not afford sufficient privacy for frank discussions and the teacher usually does not have the materials available that she has for a conference held in school.

The teacher's standards of achievement and her interpretation of the child's ability are factors common to all of these methods of evaluation and reduce the uniformity of their evaluations.

Teachers utilize various supplements to reporting such as notes to parents, phone calls, open house, mothers' teas, and special PTA groups to maintain optimal communication with the parents.

Conclusions

1. No one written method of reporting is advantageous in all situations. The special class teachers and the administration in each school system must decide what method is most appropriate for them on the basis of the objectives of their special class curriculum, the procedures used in the regular classes, and their own philosophies of grading.

2. A combination of oral and written methods of reporting should be utilized.

3. Adequate record keeping is essential to accurately appraise the child's achievement. An academic expectancy chart will help the teacher objectively evaluate the child's potential. Comparison of the child's achievement with his ability is necessary to guard against the halo effect.

4. Teachers compensate for the inadequacies of their prescribed reporting methods with supplementary notes, phone calls, and conferences. In the final evaluation, each teacher makes her own reporting method satisfactory to the children, the parents, the school, and herself.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS
ON REPORTING PRACTICES FOR EMR CLASSES

Name_____

School system in which you teach_____

Number of years teaching special classes_____

Total years of teaching experience_____

Approximate age range of your present class_____ to _____ years

Size of present class_____ Number of EMR classes in your building_____

- -

I. Do you send formal progress reports to the parents of your pupils?

Yes_____ No_____

A. If yes, how often are they sent? _____

B. If yes, what form does it take?

regular elementary report card _____

special class report card _____

C. If yes, does it include space for comments by the teacher?

Yes_____ No_____

D. Does the report give an appraisal of academic achievement?

Yes_____ No_____

1. If yes, how is it shown? _____

E. Does the report inform parents of their child's current instructional level in the academic area?

Yes_____ No_____

1. If yes, how is it done? _____

_____

F. Does the report give an exaluation of the child's character development?

Yes_____ No_____

MAKE ANY COMMENTS OR EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING ABOVE ANSWERS IN THIS SPACE:

II. Do you send a formal narrative report to the parents of your pupils?

Yes _____ No _____

A. If yes, how often? _____

B. If yes, is it structured?

Yes _____ No _____

C. If it is structured or follows some outline, please explain briefly.

D. Does the report give an appraisal of academic achievement?

Yes _____ No _____

E. Does the report inform parents of their child's current instructional level in the academic areas?

Yes _____ No _____

F. Does the report give an evaluation of the child's character development?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

III. Do you report to parents through parent conferences?

Yes _____ No _____

A. If yes, does the conference follow a specific sequence or outline?

Yes _____ No _____

B. How often are conferences held? _____

C. When are conferences held (after school, released school time, other)?

_____

D. How much time do you allow for each conference?

_____

Comments:

IV. Does your school or school system have a special class PTA?

Yes _____ No _____

A. If yes, how many meetings are held yearly? _____

B. If yes, how much time is allocated for consultation at each meeting?

_____

Comments:

V. List any supplements to your reporting method which are used in your school and the frequency with which they are used. (Such as phone calls to parents or home visits).

VI. In your opinion, would your reporting method provide sufficient information to a teacher receiving a child as a transfer student?

Yes _____ No _____

VII. In your opinion, does your reporting method solicit an objective appraisal by the teacher?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

VIII. Check the item below which, in your opinion, best describes the reporting method you are now using.

very satisfactory _____

could be improved with revisions and/or modifications _____

unsatisfactory _____

Comments:

IX. In your opinion, is your reporting method meaningful to the child?

understood by the child _____

partially understood by the child _____

little or no value to the child _____

Comments:

X. List the advantages you see in your method of reporting:

XI. List the disadvantages you see in your method of reporting:

Comments:

1/30/67 Special Education Department
University of Minnesota

January 30, 1967

Mr. John Metcalf, Supt.
Burnsville Dist. 191
Savage, Minnesota 55378

Dear Mr. Metcalf:

As a part of my M.A. program, I plan to do a descriptive study of reporting practices used with elementary school special classes for educable mentally retarded children in the twin city metropolitan area.

My present inquiry has three purposes:

1. If your system has special classes for elementary age EMR children, may I have your permission to contact their teachers?

2. If you have such classes, will you please nominate teachers whom I shall contact directly with a questionnaire on reporting practices? (A copy is enclosed for your examination).

3. If you have a special report card of some kind, may I have a sample copy as well as a copy of the card ordinarily used with your elementary school children?

The great amount of emotional discussion of this topic by parents and educators and the almost complete absence of any information in the literature combine to give this study unusual significance. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Please respond to me at the above address.

Yours truly,

Arlaine Brinkman

This study has Departmental approval.

Dewey G. Force, Jr., Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Special Education

7521 Lyndale Avenue South
Richfield, Minnesota
April 24, 1967

Miss Sherry A. Hoheisel
Vista View Elementary School
Burnsville, Minnesota 55378

Dear Miss Hoheisel:

As a part of my M.A. program, I plan to do a descriptive study of reporting practices used with elementary school special classes for educable retarded children in the twin city metropolitan area. This study is being made in cooperation with the Department of Special Education at the University of Minnesota and has the approval of Dewey G. Force, Jr., Ph.D., Associate Professor of that department.

I have secured permission from Mr. M. Darrell Miller, Director of Elementary Education, to contact special class teachers in your school system with a questionnaire. He nominated you as one of the people whom I might contact.

If you have a special report card of some kind, may I have a sample copy as well as a copy of the card ordinarily used with your elementary school children?

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Arlaine Brinkman

AB/ln

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

LIST OF SCHOOL SYSTEMS CONTACTED AND SUMMARY OF THEIR RESPONSES

	Types of written reports used	Sample reports received	Number of teachers contacted	Number of replies received
Anoka	Regular	Regular	7	4
Bloomington	Narrative	None	8	7
Brooklyn Center			No classes	
Burnsville	Regular	None	1	1
Columbia Heights	Special	Regular Special	1	1
Edina	Regular Narrative	None	3	1
Fridley	Narrative	None	1	1
Golden Valley			No classes	
Hopkins	Special	Special	1	1
Minneapolis	Regular	Regular	39	27
Minnetonka	Special	Regular Special	1	1
Mound			2	0
Mounds View	Special	Regular Special	2	2
North St. Paul-Maplewood	Regular	Regular	3	2
Orono	Regular	Regular	1	1
Osseo	Narrative	Regular Special	8	7
Richfield	Special	Regular Special	3	3
Robbinsdale	Special	Regular Special	4	4
Rosemount	Regular	None	1	1
Roseville	Regular	Regular	4	4

St. Anthony			1	0
St. Louis Park	Regular	None	2	1
St. Paul	Regular	None	23	16
So. St. Paul	Special	Regular Special	1	1
Spring Lake Park			1	0
Wayzata	Special	Regular Special	1	1
West St. Paul	Special	Regular Special	1	1
White Bear Lake	Special	Regular Special	4	3

0

SUMMARY OF REPLIES BY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Number of school systems contacted	28
Number of school systems with no EMR classes	2
Number of school systems receiving questionnaires	26
Number of school systems returning questionnaires	23
Number of school systems not returning questionnaires	3

SUMMARY OF REPLIES BY TEACHERS

	Number of teachers contacted	Replies received	
		Number	Per cent
Minneapolis	39	27	69
St. Paul	23	16	70
Suburban school districts	62	48	77
Total	124	91	73

APPENDIX C

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE NOTES

Pupil _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

Basic Areas	Teacher's Comments	Parents' Reactions
<u>Academic growth</u> Reading Language arts Arithmetic Social studies Science and health Physical education Art Music Work habits		
<u>Social and emotional growth</u> Leadership Courtesy Relationships to peers Self-control Attitudes Response to supervision		
<u>Physical growth</u> Height-weight Vision-hearing Coordination Health, attendance Handicaps		

Parental attitude

SUGGESTIVE COMMENTS FOR NARRATIVE REPORTS

Reading:

Comprehends what he reads
Understands what he reads
Reads smoothly, accurately, or fluently
Reads with expression
Completes written assignments
Does assignments correctly
Shows interest in reading lessons
Makes good use of phonics and word analysis skills
Reads independently or for pleasure
Shows interest in library reading
Enjoys reading
Is making progress in word recognition, vocabulary development, comprehension, or speed
Is learning to use the dictionary or other references
Uses the dictionary adequately

Arithmetic:

Shows skill in fundamentals
Shows understanding of fundamental facts
Knows his addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division facts
Works accurately
Shows mastery of basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division
Shows accuracy in his daily assignments
Shows accuracy and speed in computation
Is mastering number combinations
Shows reasoning or problem solving ability
Solves problems independently
Understands and solves thought problems
Uses good reasoning in thought problems
Shows evidence of thinking through a problem
Understands and uses numbers in his daily experiences
Needs further practice to attain mastery of basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division facts
Is showing growth in understanding of arithmetic

Social studies:

Understands fundamental concepts
Is acquiring useful information about the community, state, nation, or the world
Shows interest in current events
Shows interest in how people live
Participates in class discussions
Contributes to class discussions
Is learning to use maps, globes, graphs, or other references
Is interested in maps, globes, graphs, or other references

Does his best in group planning and problem solving
Is developing an interest in other people and what they do
Contributes outside materials
Is interested in class discussions
Is gaining in understanding of information

Science:

Is gaining a better understanding of the world about him
Participates in experiments or discussions
Shows growth in observation
Shows interest and curiosity
Is improving in understanding of science facts
Shows an interest in nature
Is learning and retaining science facts
Brings scientific material for class discussion
Shows growing interest in nature and science
Contributes information and materials
Contributes to class science discussions

Language arts:

Expresses ideas well orally
Speaks clearly and distinctly
Takes part in group discussions
Tells things in an interesting way
Is easily understood
Shows growth in vocabulary
Speaks so that he can be heard
Shows creative ability and imagination
Uses good English
Expresses himself in complete sentences
Expresses thoughts clearly in written work
Organizes and expresses ideas well in writing
Practices correct word usage
Shows growth in using correct English
Is able to express ideas clearly and correctly in written work
Uses good sentence structure
Expresses thoughts well in writing
Writes correctly and effectively
Proof-reads written material
Writes clearly, neatly, or legibly
Forms letters correctly
Attempts to improve his writing
Applies handwriting skills to all written work
Written work is done neatly and legibly at all times
Spells accurately in daily work
Applies spelling skills to all written work
Learns to spell needed words
Learns to spell assigned words
Masters words in spelling lessons
Uses the dictionary to check spelling

Listens attentively
Gains ideas through listening
Pays attention when others are speaking
Is a good listener
Listens courteously

Music:

Participates in music activities
Cooperates in music activities
Is learning and taking part in musical activities
Enjoys rhythmic activities
Contributes to group singing
Sings on pitch
Sings well
Sings in tune
Seems to enjoy singing or music activities
Appreciates music
Enjoys listening to music
Shows growth in knowledge and appreciation of music
Shows feeling for rhythm
Shows interest in music

Art:

Takes part in art activities
Expresses ideas creatively in art
Shows originality
Uses materials inventively
Has original ideas
Enjoys art and craft activities
Uses art and craft materials effectively
Shows enjoyment or interest in art and craft activities
Is learning new skills and techniques
Is developing individual creative expression
Is developing an awareness and understanding of art

Physical education:

Takes part in playground activities
Plays well with others
Is learning game skills
Shows body skills and coordination
Is improving in physical skills
Is improving in motor skills
Participates actively in games
Practices good sportsmanship
Follows the rules of the games
Has a sense of fair play
Shows adequate physical coordination
Demonstrates good sportsmanship

Health and safety:

Is learning health and safety rules
Learns and applies health rules
Observes safety rules
Practices safety rules or good health habits
Shows pride in personal appearance
Practices personal neatness and cleanliness
Keeps neat and clean
Comes to school clean and rested
Knows good health habits and uses them
Seems well rested
Uses good table manners
Practices adequate safety habits
Is dressed appropriately for the weather

Social habits:

Knows and follows rules
Plays well with others
Is courteous and considerate
Is dependable
Is learning self-control
Is gaining in self-confidence
Respects authority
Respects property
Displays leadership in the classroom
Makes friends easily
Cooperates willingly
Is considerate of others
Shows a helpful attitude
Responds well to suggestions
Generally behaves well
Thinks for himself
Practices courtesy and kindness
Practices good manners
Takes care of personal property
Shares willingly
Assumes and carries out responsibilities
Shares privileges and activities fairly with others
Is thoughtful of others
Shows qualities of leadership
Has earned worthwhile group approval
Appreciates humorous situations
Has a good sense of humor
Treats all people with respect
Is developing self-discipline
Is even-tempered
Is reliable
Seeks companionship
Is accepted by the group

Work habits:

Works well independently
Works well alone
Works well with others
Shows initiative
Does neat, orderly work
Works with enthusiasm and interest
Needs encouragement
Is a consciencious worker
Works accurately
Does work neatly
Plans work well
Concentrates on his work
Completes his work on time
Does his own work
Follows rules cheerfully
Works up to capacity
Does commendable work
Sees what is to be done and does it promptly
Requires constant supervision
Takes pride in work well done
Makes good use of leisure time
Completes work he has begun
Uses time and materials to his advantage
Completes work in a reasonable time
Is dependable
Carries out given tasks
Is self-motivated
Assumes and carries through his share of the work
Plans and works independently
Follows directions carefully
Uses time wisely
Listens to and follows directions
Makes valuable use of spare time
Makes good use of time and materials
Works to the best of his ability
Studies independently
Puts forth his best effort
Finishes work on time
Follows directions to the best of his ability